

Blatz Family Papers, 1898-2001



Frank H. Blatz, Jr., circa 1968

Overview of the Collection

- Title:** Blatz Family Papers, 1898-2001
- Creator:** Blatz family members
- Accession(s):** PPL-2011-025
PPL-2011-027
PPL-2011-035
PPL-2011-036
PPL-2011-040
PPL-2011-058
PPL-2021-001
PPL-2021-046
- Size:** Approximately 32 linear feet of records, comprised of:
One (1) document box
One (1) records storage box
One (1) flat box
Eight (8) newspaper boxes*
Two (2) map drawers*
Seven (7) scrapbooks
Two (2) atlases
*Note that almost all of the oversized material housed in newspaper boxes and map drawers share space with other collections.
- Repository:** Plainfield Public Library, Local History Department, 800 Park Avenue, Plainfield, NJ 07060
- Abstract:** The Blatz Family Papers document four generations of one family living and working in North Plainfield and Plainfield, mainly from the late 1890s through the 1970s. The collection includes books, scrapbooks, maps, special edition

newspapers about Plainfield, photographs, Plainfield ephemera and artifacts, and former Mayor Frank H. Blatz, Jr. campaign materials.

Language: The records are in English.

Biographical Information

The Blatz family, starting with Joseph A. Blatz (1840-1912), lived in North Plainfield on Somerset Street. Joseph and his wife Elizabeth had four children: Francis J., Joseph R., Etta M., and Hilaire C. Blatz. Joseph A. Blatz was the proprietor of several hotels, including the Hotel Chatham in North Plainfield. His son Hilaire took over as manager there shortly before Joseph's death. Joseph R. Blatz (1888-1929) worked as a clerk, a shipbuilder, and a dairyman. Etta M. Blatz married Arthur Cannon and they and their children lived with Joseph A. and Elizabeth in the family home on Somerset Street.

Francis J. Blatz (1875-1935) established his own law firm and was president of the Plainfield Common Council, member of the Board of Education, counsel for the Plainfield Board of Health, treasurer for the Community Chest of the Plainfields during World War I, Director of the Plainfield State Trust Company, a member of the Watchung Council and the Knights of Columbus, a communicant and trustee of St. Mary's Church, and the attorney for Union County for 17 years until his death in 1935. He and his wife Jeanette had three children: Frank H., Elizabeth M., and William A. Blatz.

Frank H. Blatz, Sr. (1910-1977) was a lawyer at the family firm of Codington and Blatz, Vice President of the Plainfield State Trust Company, and President of the Savings and Loan League of the Plainfields. He and his wife Grace lived in Plainfield and had one son, Frank, Jr.

Frank H. Blatz, Jr. (1935-2020), known to many as "Pete," was a graduate of Dartmouth College and Harvard Law School. He was a lawyer in the family firms of Codington and Blatz and Blatz and Feiring. He was a Plainfield councilman, a member of C.A.P., the Urban Coalition, the Plainfield Bar Association, and the Plainfield Area Chamber of Commerce. He served in the United States Marine Corps and was Captain in the U.S.M.C. Reserves. Blatz was the Republican mayor of Plainfield from 1969 through 1973. He did not seek re-election, but backed Republican candidate Paul J. O'Keefe. Blatz was Plainfield corporate counsel after his terms as mayor, director of the U.S. Railroad Association, the borough attorney for Fanwood from 1976 to 1988, a member of the board of trustees of Union County College for 30 years, as well as a board member of Wardlaw-Hartridge School, and a governor of Muhlenberg Hospital. Frank Blatz passed away on February 1, 2020 at the age of 84.

[Source: Information found in city directories, obituaries, and materials in the collection.]

Scope and Contents

The Blatz Family Papers include a variety of material dating from 1894 to 1990, the bulk of which is from the 1960s through the early 1970s. Types of records within the collection include books, scrapbooks, letters, certificates, city directories, maps, atlases, newspapers, photographs, pamphlets, booklets, stationery, business cards, bumper stickers, stock certificates, a building lease, pocket datebooks, war ration books, and a calendar. Artifacts include campaign and Plainfield button pins, a framed decorative tile, a metal newspaper printing plate, pencils, keychains, and truck driver pin badges.

Although the bulk of this collection pertains to Frank H. Blatz, Jr. and his time as mayor of Plainfield, especially during his campaign, another major focus of this collection is on the city of Plainfield itself.

Arrangement

The Blatz Family Papers are arranged into six series:

Series 1: Publications and Maps

Series 2: Photographs

Series 3: Plainfield Ephemera and Artifacts

Series 4: Francis J. Blatz and Frank H. Blatz, Sr. Ephemera

Series 5: Frank H. Blatz, Jr. Campaign Ephemera and Artifacts

Series 6: Frank H. Blatz, Jr. Scrapbooks

Index Terms

People:

Blatz, Joseph A., 1840-1912.

Blatz, Francis J., 1875-1935.

Blatz, Frank H., Sr., 1910-1977.

Blatz, Frank H., Jr., 1935-2020.

Places:

North Plainfield (N.J.)

Plainfield (N.J.)

Subjects:

Mayors--Plainfield (N.J.)

Plainfield (N.J.)--History

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements

This collection consists of paper documents that do not require any additional technology for access.

Series Description

Series 1: Publications and Maps [1894-1973, undated]

Description

Series 1 contains books and booklets about Plainfield, city directories, and special edition newspapers about Plainfield; maps of Plainfield, New Jersey, and New York; and atlases, including an 1894 F.A. Dunham atlas of the city of Plainfield and the Borough of North Plainfield. Please note that the 1898 *Ward's City of Plainfield and Borough of North Plainfield Directory* has been cataloged and added to the City Directory Collection.

Arrangement

Series 1 is arranged chronologically, when possible, by type of material, and fills 10 folders; two directories are housed in a records storage box. Please note that some of the special edition newspapers share space with other oversized papers in flat boxes, atlases are stored on shelves with other atlases, and maps are located in boxes and drawers in the Map Collection.

Series 2: Photographs [1900s-1950, undated]

Description

Series 2 contains photographs of barroom interiors (Joseph A. Blatz establishments), the exterior of a house (Blatz home on Somerset Street), the first case tried in the new City Hall courtroom (Francis J. Blatz), the roller rink on Watchung Avenue, the Strand and Paramount Theaters, and a print made from a photograph of Laing's Hotel. Please note that the scrapbooks in Series 6 contain photographs of Frank Blatz, Jr.

Arrangement

Series 2 is arranged chronologically, when possible, and is housed in one folder and a separate flat box.

Series 3: Plainfield Ephemera and Artifacts [1907-1990, undated]

Description

Series 3 contains the following ephemera: a deposit book from the Plainfield Savings Bank for Anna Goodwin, a lease agreement for a business partly run by Paul Collier on Watchung Avenue, a St. Mary's Cemetery plot purchase certificate for the Flanagan and Whelan families, a program from the Watchung Valley Country Club, blank datebooks stamped with J.D. Loizeux Lumber Company, a partially filled ledger book from the Plainfield Trust Company, a calendar page with an image of the Plainfield YMCA, and a calendar from the Historical Society of Plainfield. Artifacts include: keychains from the Park Hotel and Plainfield banks, a framed decorative tile of Plainfield landmarks, truck driver pin badges, and Plainfield buttons.

Arrangement

Series 3 ephemera is arranged chronologically, when possible, and fills six folders in a document box. Series 3 artifacts are housed in a small artifact box inside a record storage box and in a flat box.

Series 4: Francis J. Blatz and Frank H. Blatz, Sr. Ephemera [1910s-1940s]

Description

Series 4 contains the following Francis J. Blatz ephemera: a program for laying the cornerstone at the Plainfield Municipal Building and a beneficiary certificate from the Ancient Order of United Workmen of New Jersey. It also contains the following Frank H. Blatz, Sr. ephemera: a stock certificate from the First National Bank of Plainfield for Frank's wife Grace and war ration books for Frank, his wife, his mother-in-law, and a renter all living at the same address.

Arrangement

Series 4 is arranged chronologically, when possible, as well as by subject, and fills four folders.

Series 5: Frank H. Blatz, Jr. Campaign Ephemera and Artifacts [1960s-1970s]

Description

Series 5 contains campaign buttons, posters, bumper stickers, pencils, and pamphlets. Also included are mayoral business cards, blank stationery, and name tags. A large metal newspaper plate from the Courier-News (September 25, 1972) features an article about the Beaux Arts Ball held in the Plainfield Public Library, benefiting five city organizations. Mayor Blatz and his wife were co-chairs of the event. In addition to Frank H. Blatz, Jr., there are also campaign buttons and a pencil promoting Paul J. O'Keefe for mayor. Most of the items are not explicitly dated.

Arrangement

Series 5 is arranged by type of material, and fills four folders and one small artifact box within a records storage box. Note that the newspaper metal plate and campaign posters share space with other collections in two newspaper storage boxes.

Series 6: Frank H. Blatz, Jr. Scrapbooks [1964-2001, undated]

Description

Series 6 consists of scrapbooks filled with clippings, letters, invitations, photographs, ephemera, and certificates documenting Frank H. Blatz, Jr.'s terms as mayor of Plainfield, including his time as a member, and later president, of the New Jersey Conference of Mayors. One of the scrapbooks in this series also documents his post-mayoral career as well as his participation and interest in squash tournaments. Loose material has been removed from the scrapbooks to separate folders. Although most of this material pertains to Blatz's career, some items are personal, including an illustrated birth announcement for his son, Gregory Frazier Blatz, born in 1964.

Arrangement

Series 6 scrapbooks are individually wrapped or boxed, and loose materials are housed in folders in part of a records storage box and an oversize box. All are located on one shelf.

Administrative Information

Access & Restrictions

The Blatz Family Papers are available for research.

Access is restricted to materials prepared by the Local History department staff. All materials must be viewed in the Plainfield Room and may not be removed to another area of the library without permission of the Library Director or designee. Materials must be handled carefully and kept in order. Materials must not be leaned upon, altered, folded, ripped, or traced upon. Marks may not be added or erased from materials. Materials must be returned directly to Local History department staff and inspected before the researcher leaves the Plainfield Room.

One photocopy may be made (by Plainfield Public Library staff) of each document for the purpose of research; official Local History departmental reproduction fees may apply. Permission to publish must be obtained by the Plainfield Public Library Board of Trustees as delegated to the Library Director. Permission to publish does not constitute a copyright clearance. The researcher is responsible for further copyright restrictions. The Plainfield Public Library is not responsible for the misuse of copyrighted material.

Preferred Citation

Identification of item; Date (if noted); "Blatz Family Papers", Box and Folder Number, Local History Department, Plainfield Public Library, Plainfield, New Jersey.

Acquisition Information

The majority of the collection was donated in 2011 by Frank H. Blatz, Jr. Scrapbooks were donated in 2021 by Brenda Anderson.

Processing Information

This collection was inventoried and processed by Sarah Hull in 2011, with additional processing by Sally Weiner in 2016. The finding aid was written by Sally Weiner in 2016 and updated in 2023 and 2025, to accommodate the 2021 accession. Finding aid content follows the guidelines suggested by *Describing Archives: A Content Standard*.

Collection Inventory

Series 1: Publications and Maps [1894-1973, undated]

Box	Folder	Title/Description	Date(s)
1	1	<i>Plainfield, New Jersey: The Queen City of the East</i> (PR 917.493 PEC)	1923
	2	<i>A City of Beautiful Homes in the City of Plainfield...Beachwood</i> (PR 974.936 CIT)	[1924]
	3	<i>This is Plainfield</i> (PR 917.493 LEA)	1965, 1972
	4	<i>The Plainfields in New Jersey</i> (PR 917.49 PLA)	1963
	5	<i>Illustrated Fact Book and Map: The Plainfields, New Jersey and Surrounding Communities</i> (PR 917.49 ILL)	1965
	6	<i>History of Plainfield</i> (PR 974.939 HOF), <i>Plainfield Perspective</i> (PR 352 PLA)	1964, 1973
	7	<i>Courier News</i> , "Worst Storm in Years" issue	1914
	8	<i>Courier News</i> , "Free Public School Centennial Anniversary Edition"	1948
	9	Maps – Plainfield & North Plainfield; NJ Road Map; Westchester County, NY; Passaic County, NJ; NJ Fish and Game Habitats SEE: Map Collection Boxes 2 and 3; Map Drawers C1 and C2	1924, 1926, 1934, [1950], 1936
	10	<i>New Jersey Road Maps of the 18th Century</i> (NJR 912.749 PRI)	1964
	11	Magazine, <i>The Perfect Home</i> , J.G. Mulford (Plainfield real estate agent)	1938

2	Wand's City of Plainfield Directory	1901
	Richmond's Directory of Plainfield	1917

SEE ALSO: **Early Plainfield Newspapers Box** for the *Plainfield Record*, 1919
Courier News Anniversary Editions Box for 50th Anniversary issue, 1934
Courier News Special Issues Box for 50th Anniversary issue, North Plainfield, 1935; Plainfield Centennial Edition, 1969
Courier News Souvenir Editions Box for "Flood '73"
Atlas Shelf for Dunham *Atlas of the City of Plainfield and the Borough of North Plainfield*, 1894; Dolph & Stewart *Map of Union County* (bound), undated
Map Boxes 2 and 3 for maps listed in Folder 9
Map Drawers C1 and C2 for maps listed in Folder 9

Series 2: Photographs [1900s-1950, undated]

Box	Folder	Title/Description	Date(s)
1	12	Photographs – Plainfield theaters (2) & roller rink	1940, 1950, undated
3		Photograph (matted) – Men standing at bar, "Grandpa Blatz son Joe"	1900s
		Photograph (matted) – Men standing at bar, "Joe Blatz's Hotel, Hotel Chatham"	1900s
		Photograph (mounted) – "First case tried in the new City Hall District Court Room", by Paul Collier	1919
		Photograph (matted) – "Blatz House, Cannon House, 221 Somerset (Shell Station)"	1910s
		Print of original photograph (framed) – Laing's Hotel, 1865	1921

Series 3: Plainfield Ephemera and Artifacts [1907-1990, undated]

Box	Folder	Title/Description	Date(s)
1	13	Building lease agreement; Plainfield Savings Bank deposit book	1908, 1907-1916
	14	St. Mary's cemetery plot certificate (with additional info written on back)	1919-1959
	15	Plainfield State Trust Company Bank ledger	1935
	16	Loizeaux Lumber Company pocket datebooks	1939-1941
	17	Calendar page – Plainfield YWCA; Calendar – Historical Society of Plainfield	1938, 1990
	18	Program – Watchung Valley Country Club	undated
2a		Plainfield buttons (10)	1969, 1972-1973, undated
		Misc. buttons (2)	undated
		Keychain – Park Hotel	undated
		Keychain – Plainfield Savings Bank	1968
		Keychain – City National Bank, Plainfield	undated
		Pin badges – for Plainfield truck driver, truckman, hackman, cartman, expressman, taxicab	1967-1968
3		Framed decorative tile with Plainfield landmarks	undated

Series 4: Francis J. Blatz and Frank H. Blatz, Sr. Ephemera [1910s-1940s]

Box	Folder	Title/Description	Date(s)
1	19	Certificate – Grand Lodge, Ancient Order of United Workmen of New Jersey (Francis J. Blatz)	1910
	20	Program – Laying of the Corner Stone of the Plainfield Municipal Building (Francis J. Blatz)	1917
	21	Stock certificate – First National Bank of Plainfield (Grace K. Blatz)	1937
	22	War ration books for Frank H. Blatz, Sr. family & lodger	1940s

Series 5: Frank H. Blatz, Jr. Campaign Ephemera and Artifacts [1960s-1970s]

Box	Folder	Title/Description	Date(s)
1	23	Pamphlets – Blatz re-election campaign	[1969]
	24	Mayoral stationery and business cards	1960s-1970s
	25	Campaign bumper stickers for councilman & mayor	1960s
	26	Newspaper clipping – Blatz re-election advertisement	1969
2a		Campaign pencils – Blatz and O’Keeffe for mayor	1960s-1970s
		Campaign buttons & pin – Blatz and O’Keeffe for mayor	1960s-1970s
		Campaign emery board – O’Keeffe for mayor	1970s-1980s

SEE ALSO: **Plainfield Families Box 3** for Blatz campaign poster, [1968]
Artifact Box 4 for *Courier News* newspaper plate, Beaux Arts Ball, 1972

Series 6: Frank H. Blatz, Jr. Scrapbooks [1964-2001, undated]

Box/Loc	Folder	Title/Description	Date(s)
2	1	Scrapbook inserts - Photos, ephemera, certificates (NJ Conference of Mayors)	1965-1998
	2	Scrapbook inserts - Letters, telegrams (NJ Conference of Mayors)	1966-1980
	3	Scrapbook inserts - Ephemera, clippings (green cover, “Frank H. Blatz”)	1968-1969
	4	Scrapbook inserts - Clippings (green cover, “Frank H. Blatz”)	1969, undated
	5	Scrapbook inserts - Photos, ephemera (“Frank H. Blatz”)	1969-1973
	6	Scrapbook inserts - Clippings (“Frank H. Blatz”)	1970
	7	Scrapbook inserts - Ephemera (plain green cover)	1970-1975
	8	Scrapbook inserts - Clippings (plain green cover)	1970-1980
	9	Scrapbook inserts - Photo, ephemera (City of Plainfield seal)	1970-1972
	10	Scrapbook inserts - Clippings (orange cover)	1976-1977
4	1	Scrapbook inserts - Illustrated birth announcement for Gregory Frazier Blatz (NJ Conference of Mayors)	1964
	2	Scrapbook inserts - Certificates, ephemera (NJ Conference of Mayors)	1971-1980

3	Scrapbook inserts - Clippings (NJ Conference of Mayors)	1974, 2001
4	Scrapbook inserts - Clippings (City of Plainfield seal)	1971-1972
	Scrapbook - New Jersey Conference of Mayors	1964-1980
	Scrapbook - Post-mayoral career, squash tournaments (orange cover)	1976-1977
Shelf	Scrapbook - Mayoral race ("Frank H. Blatz")	1968
	Scrapbook - Mayoral ("Frank H. Blatz")	1969
	Scrapbook - Mayoral (green cover, "Frank H. Blatz")	1969-1973
	Scrapbook - Mayoral (City of Plainfield seal)	1970-1972
	Scrapbook - Mayoral (plain green cover)	1972-1973